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SIPDIS

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DEPT. FOR THE SECRETARY;
NSC FOR NSA HADLEY;
FROM THE AMBASSADOR

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TAGS: PREL PGOV OVIP MOPS I2 IT EUN NATO

SUBJECT: ITALIAN FM D'ALEMA SEEKING GOOD START TO
RELATIONSHIP, WILLING TO DO MORE IN IRAQ UNDER NATO

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RONALD P. SPOGLI, REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

SUMMARY

¶1. (S/NF) I met with FM D'Alema June 13 to preview his plans for his June 16 meetings with you. He wants to start the new Italian government's relations with us on a positive and constructive note. D'Alema said Italy can and will do more in Afghanistan, is willing to do more in Iraq under a NATO cover, and with the right security arrangements, is willing to consider a civilian contribution in Nassiriya/Dhi Qar province. I am cautious, but believe there is an opportunity to have a productive relationship with D'Alema and the Prodi government. End Summary.

¶2. (S/NF) D'Alema saw me today for almost an hour one-on-one. He stressed that the new Italian government does not want a cold climate or a rocky start in its relations with the U.S. and does not want to be seen like the Zapatero government was after its pullout from Iraq. He said he wanted to go to Washington to do what "all Europeans want," continue the rapprochement between Europe and the U.S. He told me he views himself as "the good guy" vis-a-vis many of his more prominent European colleagues. Prior to his visit to Iraq last week, D'Alema reported that the German Foreign Minister told him he was "crazy to go" because Iraq "was lost." D'Alema, on the other hand, wants to increase Italy's involvement, albeit on a civilian basis.

IRAQ

¶3. (S/NF) D'Alema started the conversation with Iraq, stating that the Iraqis see Italy's withdrawal plans as "a model" and "do not care at all/at all about an Italian PRT." I told him that the U.S. certainly did care about an Italian PRT in Dhi Qar, that Italy had come to be identified with that province, that Italian contributions there had helped make it a largely peaceful zone, and that leaving the province without appropriate supervision would be taken badly in Washington and Dhi Qar. D'Alema replied that politically, he could not justify sending a thousand troops to protect 15 civilians (I told him I didn't want to quibble with the numbers but that we had seen different, smaller figures for troops required). He had asked the UK if they would provide force protection for Italians there and had been told no. When I asked if Italy intended to continue to have any civilian presence in Nassiriya/Dhi Qar, if appropriate security arrangements could be found, D'Alema said he was willing to consider this, adding that it would have to be on one of our (U.S.) bases.

¶4. (S/NF) D'Alema stressed that Italy wanted to remain involved in Baghdad and was inclined to increase its presence there. He said he wanted more NATO involvement in Iraq, and added that "where there is more NATO, we can be more involved," including with more police and security training in Baghdad or elsewhere. He said that he would advocate Italian participation in anything that could be done under NATO in Iraq. Italy, he said, had been invited to do training in Kurdistan and would accept the invitation, as the security situation there was permissive. He also said that Italy would continue to share significant intelligence with the U.S. in Iraq.

AFGHANISTAN, IRAN, BALKANS, SOMALIA

¶5. (S/NF) D'Alema thought things were not going well in Afghanistan, but assured me that Italy can and will do more there. I told him that we would need Italy's support on strong measures against Iran if the current initiative did not succeed, to which he replied that with 38 billion Euro in trade, Italy should be at the table with the other EU countries. He offered that Italy could be helpful on Somalia. He said he believed the Balkans need to be

integrated into Europe rapidly, and that we all needed to work to keep Serbia from becoming isolated.

CALIPARI, GUANTANAMO

¶6. (S/NF) Finally, he said he needed to find some diplomatic language for the joint press availability in Washington. The Italian press expects him to say something on the Calipari case (the Italian intel officer accidentally killed by U.S. troops near BIAP in 2005) and he feels he will have to say he raised it with you. D'Alema was also asked by the Italian press if he would raise Guantanamo. He answered that he would rely on the EU position, but expects he will be asked again on Friday.

¶7. (S/NF) D'Alema wants to play a helpful role on many issues and to be seen by us as "somebody doing more than most of his European counterparts." I believe we have an opportunity to do some good work with him when he sees you on Friday. I look forward to seeing you then. Regards.

SPOGLI